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divinities appear not in their ancient forms, but in the "Anglo-Saxon attitudes" that are at present so dear to English art. Yet the poem, in spite of its unreality, in spite of its mannerism, abounds in beauty and vigor of expression. The imitation of the archaic style is, indeed, carried to excess, as if to cover the lack of the antique spirit; "learn" for *teach*, "cherishing" for *kissing*, "burg," "eyen," "glaive," "tomorn," — these are a few among hundreds of mannerisms; yet in the main the diction is effective. With the conduct of the story we have to find some fault, — a deficiency in rapidity and directness. In a narrative poem of ten thousand lines, based upon a plot that, as we have intimated, left much to be desired in respect of unity, there was need to accent strongly the linking points of the story, to mark its articulations, so to speak, with especial distinctness. In doing this Mr. Morris has not perfectly succeeded, and in consequence "Sigurd," as a story, reads a little heavily. The interest of the poem depends in considerable part upon individual passages, — in this respect illustrating again the modern English taste in poetry, — and failing somewhat in the total impression, the ἀρχιτεκτονία of which the ancients thought so much more than we think, and perhaps not erroneously. The metre that Mr. Morris has chosen is an alliterative line of six accents, with a foot generally trisyllabic; and in his hands it is flexible and musical, though it does not escape the dangers of monotony. Whether as to melody, form, or sentiment, the examples we have given must suffice. "Sigurd" abounds in beautiful and quotable lines, and in healthfulness of tone is a distinct advance upon Mr. Morris's previous poems; but much is still wanting to it in this respect. It has undeniable power, undeniable beauty; and yet it is too much the outcome of a transient *vogue* in sentiment to insure a very long remembrance.

7. — *Sidonie*. (*Froment Jeune et Risler Ainé*.) From the French of ALPHONSE DAUDET. Boston: Estes and Lauriat. 1877. 12mo. pp. 262.

THIS story opens with a grand wedding-dinner, effectively described, but the peculiarities and characteristics of each guest are detailed before one is interested in them. This is a tax on memory. As the present is a careless age, no one likes to be called out of bed to learn by rote a list of the staple products and capitals of all the countries he has not yet visited. However, "Sidonie" at first reads smoothly and pleasantly; soon it becomes very interesting and exciting, and finally — it degenerates. The beautiful Sidonie is an aggre-

gation of bad qualities and evil passions, a truly dangerous woman, concealing her heart beneath grace and fascination. She is indeed a type, with all the typical errors of her sex. Indulgence and ambition are kept under cover for a while. Good looks and passions, destitute of principle, always end in crime of some kind. It would have been better to have commenced the story with her birth than to be obliged to go back for facts. Having married for money, she soon leads a demi-monde life that excites the reader, but arouses the wrong nerves, those of sensation only. Though startled twice and terribly alarmed once in her career, she has her own way all through. On one occasion she flanks a detective who is about to expose her by making him feel that he was the cause of all — she having fallen in love with him — and he is conquered. This accomplished, she goes on her way and carries out her revenge to the letter.

The style is fair and suggestive, but neither witty nor brilliant, due, no doubt, in a measure, to the translation by a foreign hand. There is no repartee in the book. The characters are good stock actors who do their parts well, but there is no star. Frantz is as unstable as water, unnecessarily brutal in deserting his betrothed, and simply disappears from the book. Froment is a successful villain, who not only does what he wants but is saved by his victim and never complains even of dyspepsia. Still a philosopher, knowing the cause, could deduce the effect, and point a moral. The author controls himself and hence in parts is very strong, but at times he sits down and “lets things go.”

To the educated reader this painful story would make the good better and the bad worse. It represents power without balance, and portrays the success of intrigue while devotion and honor are plunged into the abyss of despair and wretchedness, reminding one of the horrible ending of Allston's “*Monaldi*.” There is ample opportunity for repentance, but it does not come. Sidonie, the gorgeous lady, has her revenge, and becomes a brazen concert girl, painted and coarse, and as a representative woman she is well described. Zizi is the sweet minor key of the novel, lending solemnity and pathos to the “score.” Her deformity intensifies her feelings and leads to good acts, — so often the opposite in man, when afflicted by disease. The whole account of her little workshop where she mounts beetles and humming-birds is exceedingly clever.

She, of all others, should have been happy at last; yet the cruel author slays her, — verdict, unjustifiable homicide! Risler, the bovine husband, is a warning to all steady, self-concentrated men, who wrap themselves in their work and see nothing that is going on. The finest

pages in the story are those which narrate his heroic self-denial and herculean efforts to save the honor of the firm, when once awakened to the enormity of guilt. His unflinching humiliation of his wicked wife absorbs the reader who would at least expect him to be rewarded for all his unmerited sufferings and noble acts; yet the merciless author permits Sidonie to conquer and crush him, and Risler, the victimized spouse, is tormented into suicide — verdict, wilful murder on the part of Alphonse Daudet, who can show no just cause for such treatment. The lazy selfishness of Dolobelle is brought out in strong colors, showing him up as a French Turveydrop. Daudet says of him: "If a placard is fastened crookedly on a wall, every word on it looks crooked too." There is evidence of "Sidonie" having been written by a strong man, who stopped before he was through and would not furnish one pound of care when one ounce would suffice. Some portions are morbid, some poetical; in many the ethics are very queer. Still the various phases of life are skilfully portrayed. The descriptions of luxury and scenery are *con amore*. If read closely by a keen mind this little book would produce the effect of a romantic essay, startling and improving, for it would teach one what to avoid in life. Yet, after it is digested, one feels how little there is in it of morals, punishment, religion, or happiness.

8. — *Kismet*. Boston: Roberts Brothers. 1877. 16mo. pp. 338.

THIS is a peripatetic novel, descriptive of the Nile and its surroundings. The story is well told and is full of "happy thoughts," but it has faults. Three families make the trip, in different boats, and their intercourse is the main feature of the work. There is love, romance, poetry, information, and badinage; but there are too many sunsets, and though some of them are elaborately described, word-painting abounds, and the green tint, peculiar to Oriental skies, is not once mentioned. Now and then the guide-book appears too evident, but we can forgive that, for several of the characters are admirably drawn. Too little respect is paid to the third Commandment, and there are crude and careless expressions. At times there is an epidemic of moonlight, and "bronze" is in excess of the demand; but, as a whole, the story can be read with pleasure, profit, and interest. The book gives evidence of a good mind, healthy, happy, and uninfluenced by any morbidly sensational fancies. As the reader meets with certain passages, he not only enjoys them, but experiences a desire to know the author and "talk it over," with *her*?

Not a few ideas are good and suggestive. Mr. Hamlyn "impressed